



JESUS & DIRTY FEET

Part 23 of The Gospel of John

Pastor Mark Driscoll | John 13:1-17 | May 20, 2001

Evening, guys. We're in John 13 tonight, just continuing through the Gospel of John, that will conclude in September. October we'll start Proverbs.

John 13, a great text. One of the classic portraits of Christ in the New Testament. I'll set the stage for you though, because if you don't get the setting and the – sort of the context that we find it in, you'll miss some of the significance here. How many of you, if you could, would want to know when and how you were going to die? I don't want – some of you are freaking. You say, "Yeah, I'd love to know that." You see, I don't want to know that. I don't – I don't know, especially, if it was a brutal, terrible, painful, excruciating death. Jesus didn't have the luxury of ignorance. He knew. He knew when he was going to die, how he was going to die, who was going to betray him. He has said frequently, throughout John's Gospel, "My time is not yet come." His time is nearly come. He knows that he will die through crucifixion. He says that when he is raised and lifted up, he'll draw many to himself. He knows that he will also be betrayed by a friend. In fact, one of his good buddies is going to participate in his murder and hand him over to die. And Jesus knows when and how this is going to transpire.

And where we find John 13, is the day before Jesus dies. It's all the events culminating and leading up to his death. And the issue is, if you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you do tonight? Who would you be with? How would you spend your time? What would be the final memory that you'd give yourself before your friend betrays you, you're murdered in a brutal and painful and public way? And that's exactly the situation that we find ourselves in, in the 13th Chapter of John's Gospel. John tell us, "It was just before the Passover Feast." Just to tie the Old Testament in here real quick. Last year we spent a lot of time looking at the book of Exodus. The Passover was this event whereby God put a succession of plagues and consequences for sin and rebellion upon the nation of Egypt, for enslaving and mistreating his people. The final one, of which was the killing of the first-born male. The first-born son in every family.

The only way that your family would be spared of this tremendously painful punishment, was if you sacrificed a lamb, and if that animal's blood was put over the doorpost to your home. And then, as death passed by, it would in fact, spare your family. And so it was all foreshadowing Jesus, and showing – that's why Jews every year celebrate Passover. Many of the them do not understand though, that all of that was just fulfilled in Jesus. That's what Paul tells us in Corinthians, that Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been slain. John the Baptizer knew this. When he saw Jesus, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." And so Jews had, for hundreds of years, been celebrating Passover every year, that God literally passed over them and spared them. And all of that was foreshadowing Jesus, who would shed his own blood and lay down his life, and as the first-born son would in fact, pay the sins for all of the children of God.

So, John tells us that it's all coming to this climax and this head, that it's the perfect time – it's Passover. It's the time when Jesus is to die to fulfill all that was promised. We're then told that Jesus knew the time had come for him to leave this world, and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. Jesus' death is impending. He is nearing his cross, and he is going to show his love. He's not done loving his people. He's going to love them right to the bitter end. And so the bitter – the love, rather, is the full extent.

And so, Jesus is gonna show the full extent of his love. And it's amazing, because he isn't just going to die very quickly, and you'll find that he has no concern for himself. He's thinking about his friends. That's how he spends his final moments. He's getting his friends together, his disciples, his students, to have a meal together. "The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus." Judas is present at the meal. And you think about it. If you knew that tonight was your last night, tomorrow that you were going to be murdered, and the guy that was gonna set it all up was a good friend of yours, would you have him over to dinner tonight? And you may – you may kill him, but you might have him over for a singular purpose of justice. You wouldn't bring him over to your house, feed him dinner, love him, be nice to him, treat him with dignity; that's what Jesus does. Jesus takes Judas, who is already agreed to kill him. He's made this decision in his heart. And he sits down and has a bite to eat with Judas, that's how Jesus spends his final moments.

Scandalous humility, scandalous grace, scandalous kindness; when the Scripture says that God is Holy, what that means is that God is different. God is completely other. He is just different than us. He thinks, acts, governs differently, that's why we're not God. God is just other – just different. It's enough to be nice to your friends, Scripture says, but to be nice to your enemies, that's a whole other level of kindness. Jesus is loving, and patient, and kind with Judas Iscariot. The context, in Luke 22, that tells us about this same event, is that as they were having this dinner together, a dispute broke out. The guys were all arguing. Do you remember what they were arguing about, "Which one of us is going to be the greatest," which should be a fairly simple question to answer. If you're having dinner with Jesus, and an argument breaks out about which of you has the best resume, vote for Christ, okay – just vote Jesus. I mean Peter is pretty impressive, and John's got some skill, but that's God, so he wins. You know, he's the greatest.

But, they're arguing, "Which one of us is the best? Which one of us is the greatest? The strongest? The most capable? When we get into the Kingdom, which one of us is gonna sit on the throne and be in charge?" And I love Jesus. Jesus does not rebuke them. He does not get angry with them. Instead, he redirects them. He educates them, and he tells them there is a way to be the greatest. If you want to be the greatest, here's how you do it; you serve – you serve. If you want to be first, you got to be last. If you want to be highest, you got to be lowest. If you want to be the most, you got to be the least. God's Kingdom works on an inverted set of principles that seem completely antithetical. You got to serve.

And as they're having this meal, and they're arguing about which one of them is the best and the greatest, Jesus shows them how to be the greatest, and how to be the best. "Jesus knew," – Verse 3 – "that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him." One of the classic portraits you've probably heard on many occasions, of Christ's humility. Philippians 2, Paul says that our attitude should be the same as Christ, Jesus, who, though being in very nature was God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped or held on to. But instead, he emptied himself. He set aside his rights, and he humbled himself and he took on the form of a servant and a slave, all the way to the point of actually dying for us, because of his love. And that our attitude should be like his. Jesus demonstrates that humility, that scandalous humility in this instance.

As he's sitting with his friends, he notices that they all have dirty feet, and so he determines that he will wash them. And in that culture, this is the lowliest duty of the most common slave. If you were the foot washer, you were on the bottom of the social food chain. You were the least of the least. Well, what happened was, unlike our day that has paved roads, you have dirt roads; animals and people are traveling on those roads and they're covered with food, they're covered with animal dung, they're covered with mud and dirt and all kinds of things. You're wearing open-toed sandals, walking a great number of miles. Your feet just get disgusting. They're calloused, they're hardened, they're covered with dung, they're covered with mud, they're just sick. Most guys, even in our culture with a daily shower and Fast Actin' Tinactin still have just stinky, nasty feet. The last thing any guy wants to do is clean another guy's feet. Some of you guys know exactly what your feet smell like; it is evidence that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

And so, what would happen is that when you walked into a home, the person that was in the most humbled position in the home would wash the feet of the guests. In this instance, they were using a borrowed room, according to Luke 22, for the meal, so there was no host, and so there was no one who was sort of least on the totem pole to wash one another's feet. And so Jesus, looking at his men, realizes that no one has washed their feet. I don't know why they haven't washed their feet – maybe they were tired. Maybe they were hungry. Maybe they felt it was too demeaning. Maybe they were waiting for one of the others to do it. Maybe they all felt they were all too good. I don't know. But, Jesus sets the example. Jesus takes off his outer garment, puts a towel around his waist, gets a basin of water, and goes around, and God takes the feet of the men that he has created and he scrubs them. He takes the dirt and the dung off of the feet of his own creatures – humility beyond imagination.

I mean it's enough that God would come down and be one of us. That's humbling enough. But then, for God to come down as a slave, as the lowest servant among us all, it is scandalous. And we'll see that there are a few different reactions to this, but the one thing I want to stress for you — and this is the thing that struck me most in this account that John the beloved gives us. He washed Judas' feet. I mean, can you even imagine that? Imagine if you had a friend that for three years you had fed, housed, loved, invested in, taught Scripture to, prayed with – you had never sinned in your whole life, you had certainly, then, never sinned against them; that you cared for them. And they, for some reason, despised you and they decided that tomorrow they were going to murder you. And so tonight, you brought them over to your house and you fed them, and you washed their feet. It's just unbelievable to me, Christ's humility.

My wife, when we were laying in bed reading the Scriptures together last night, she said, "Would you do that?" I said, "Well, of course not. There's no way." If I had a – you know, a large basin of water, I would put his head in. That's what I would do. And I would keep his head in until he was not breathing. That's what I would do. I wouldn't wash his feet. I would drown his head. That's what I would do. Because God is different though, God is holy, God is other; Jesus washes the feet of Judas Iscariot, the feet that are going to walk out of the meal, betray him for a couple bucks, and then walk back in and murder him. And Jesus knows this. And it's just – to me it is scandalous because, is Judas ever going to change? Is he ever going to repent? Is he ever going to be a Christian? Is he ever gonna love God? Yes or no? No. He's the one doomed for destruction.

Judas is going to murder. What has Judas been doing up to this point in the ministry? Stealing the money. I mean, if you steal money from Jesus, you get the corner in the Blair Witch basement of hell. That's just wrong. You can't take money from Jesus. I mean, you're not gonna get away with that, you know. You're stealing – it's bad enough to steal money from a church or a ministry. I mean, that's bad. That'll get you in the Blair Witch basement. But, you get the corner if you're stealing money from Jesus Christ. He's been stealing money for three years, from the ministry fund, he's going to betray and murder Jesus, he is going to commit suicide and kill himself, and go to hell. I don't know about you. Jesus has already given this guy three years of loving affection and patient guidance. He's only got a few hours left to live, and if it were me, I would be like, "Well, to hell with Judas Iscariot. You've gotten enough of my time, enough of my love, enough of my grace. I'm done with you. That's it. You've been stealing. You're gonna murder me. You're gonna kill yourself. You're gonna go to hell. That's the way it's going down. We all know it. Forget about it," but, not Christ.

And I was thinking about it. Why in the world does Jesus wash Judas' feet, feed him, love him, care for him, when it is not going to make a bit of difference? Why would he do that?

Jesus did this because he loved the Father. Jesus knew, "I'm not scrubbing Judas' feet for Judas. I'm scrubbing Judas' feet for the Father. Judas may never appreciate this. The Father does. Judas may never show me any love, or kindness, or affection, but the Father does. So, I'm not doing this for Judas. I'm doing this to Judas, but I'm doing this out of love for the Father."

And that's the heart of humility. The heart of humility is not, "I'm going to do something because it's going to be successful, or it's going to work, or it's going to be a good return on my investment of time or emotion or energy or money. I do this because I love God, and whether or not anyone cares or anyone ever appreciates it, I do it because I love God, and God knows my heart." And that's why Jesus does it. And so, Jesus doesn't get bitter, like, "I've wasted my time. I've wasted my energy. I've wasted my investment. No, I haven't. If I love God, and if I've done it for the glory of the Father, then my time was not a waste. My energy was not spent in vain. It did a good thing, and that was to honor the Father."

So, Jesus washes the feet of his men, including Judas Iscariot. And I think the hard part of Judas for me, is I'd like to think that I'm better than Judas. It's this myth that I think we all tell ourselves. Judas is a punk, and a thug, and a thief, and a crook, and a hoodlum, and he should die and go to hell. That's the way it is for Judas. He should never get his feet washed – why – because he's a bad guy, unlike me, who's a really good guy. But the issue is has Christ come to me? Has Christ humbled himself before me? Has Christ loved me? Has he served me? Has he forgiven me? Has he not just cleansed my feet, but has he cleansed my soul, and dealt with not just my dirt, but my sin? Yeah. He certainly has. Well, how am I any different than Judas? Have I taken money that belonged to God and not given it to God's purposes, but wasted it? Yeah. Guilty. Have I denied Christ? Well, yeah, I have on occasion. Have I maintained this outward sense of piety, when in my heart I was bitter and angry against him? Yeah, I have. I really have. Have I at certain times thought, like Judas, that God was wrong, or that God didn't know what he was doing, or that God wasn't to be trusted, that somehow Jesus needed my advice – I have. And we all have.

And so, I think the reason that Judas bothers me so much, is because I am far more like Judas than I am like Christ. I think it's true for us all. And so, Jesus washes the feet of his men. Verse 6, "He came to Simon Peter," I love Peter. Peter is impetuous, loud, brash. A lot of people think Peter has got some character defect. I personally think he is just Irish. I think Peter is Irish. "He came to Simon Peter who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Peter is apparently skilled in recognizing the obvious. Just washed the feet of a bunch of guys. He's got a bucket. He's got a towel. He picks up your foot, "You're gonna wash my feet?" Yes, Columbo, I am. Now – genius. Peter, like most men, is skilled in the art of recognizing the obvious, and then stating it. "You going to wash my feet? Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' I want to camp here for a minute. Jesus says, "Peter, you don't know what I'm doing, but trust me. In hindsight, in retrospect, further down the road, you will look back and you will say, 'Now it all makes sense.' But right now, you don't know what I'm doing." You guys need to know this. Anyone who tells you that they know God's will is lying. We don't know what God's will is. What we know, is that we're supposed to love God and do what pleases him and just follow according to what we know.

What am I gonna be doing in 50 years? I don't know. I have no idea what the big conclusion that God has for me. I don't know. It may not be a big conclusion. All I know is that I'm supposed to love God, follow his Word, do what he says, and trust him. Even if I don't see where it's all going or how it's all coming together. But I know, that at certain points of my life as I have looked back, I have seen, "Ah. That's what God was up to." In retrospect, it all makes sense. In the mean time, it's all fake. You don't know where you're going, what you're doing. How is this gonna happen?" And in retrospect, when it all comes together, you go, "God is a genius. God had this all figured out. God knew exactly what he was doing." And in hindsight, it looks brilliant. Now the problem is, is that most of the books that you buy in the Christian bookstore, it's people who have looked back and already seen all of the things that have happened in their life, and they turn them into steps. Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, Step 4; but that's how they got to the place that they finally arrived. They got there by faith. They didn't know what God was doing. And in hindsight, we know. That's what he tells Peter, "Peter, just trust me. Go with it. One day you're gonna look back and this is all gonna make sense for you."

I had that discussion with a couple this morning. Last week they were at the 9:00 service and they said, "We don't know what God is doing. My wife just lost her job. I just lost my job. I had turned down a bunch of other good job offers because I thought this one was gonna stick. Now the economy's taken a downturn. They're cutting off in my area. There's no way I'm gonna find a good job. We are in deep trouble. I don't know what God's doing." He comes to me this week, he says, "Well, I got a job." Three days later, four days later, whatever it was. He says, "It pays a lot more than my old job. And God worked it out – God fired me so that he could transition me so that I would look and find this job, and it's gonna pay more money and it's a better job." And in retrospect, I was thinking, "God, what are you doing?" And as I, you know, sort of glance backward, it's like, "Ah. God knew what he was doing," and it may in the moment have been confusing to me, but in hindsight it all makes perfect sense."

And you'll know that as God brings people into your life, friends, family members, experiences, as he brings opportunities, and instruction, and correction, and love. You may not know how it's all going to fit together, but as it starts to come together, you look back and you say, "God has been at work here. Even when I didn't know what he was doing, maybe when I didn't even know him, God was at work." And God is faithful. This whole concept of sovereignty, that God overrides human history, and he works everything out for good. God is into the recycling business, and takes everything and reshapes it into something that is glorious, and he's good at that. And so Jesus tells Peter, "Let me wash your feet. Don't worry about it. Just trust me. Someday this will all makes sense to you, in hindsight."

Peter then responds with a favorite of my one-year old son, "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Peter likes to tell Jesus what to do. I know none of you can relate to that. "And Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.' Unless you can receive my grace and my humility and my service and my concern for you, then we do not have a friendship. "Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'" Still tells Jesus what to do. "Okay, you're God, I recognize that, but I'm still gonna tell you what to do. Wash my whole body." Why is it that Peter struggles so mightily with having Jesus wash his feet? Tell me. Why is it so hard for Peter to have Jesus serve him in that way? Pride. It's hard, isn't it? There is something in us that esteems autonomy and self-sufficiency. I stand on my own two feet. I take care of myself. I don't need anybody. And Christ comes to you, and he says, "You need me." "No, no, no. I'll take care of my own dirt," "You can't take care of your own dirt. You're all dirty. You need me."

Some people have said foolishly, that Christianity is a very easy religion, because you don't have to do anything to be saved. And I will tell you that

makes it the hardest of all religions. If I were to tell you, do these 15 things and then you get God's love, you could do them; feel very good about yourself – like you accomplished something. If I told you, you could never please God, you could never love God, you could never know God, you could never find God unless God came to you, humbled himself, took on human form, knelt down, and loved you and spoke to you like a child and gave you himself. And you couldn't earn it. You couldn't find it. You couldn't merit it. You just received it with thankfulness. You have nothing to boast about, it is just all mercy and humility and kindness. You would say, "Well, that is very hard." That is hard because we want to be able to declare our own victory and our own participation and our own cleansing.

And Jesus says, "No. I'll take care of everything. You just need to accept me. You just need to receive me. You need to let me wash you. I'll take care of your mud. I'll take care of your dirt. I'll take care of your stench." And Peter wrestles with that. I tell you guys what; I am that exact same way as Peter. Some of you have a hard time being like Jesus and taking care of other people. Some of you have a hard time being like Peter and having others take care of you. I am the last category of man. I like to help people. I like to take care of things. I'm responsible. I'm mature. I was the oldest of five kids. I like helping, making sure everybody else is taken care of. What is hard is for me to receive anything. I'm the guy, if we go out to dinner, you say, "Hey, let me pick up the tab." No. No. No. I'm picking up the tab. "Anything I can do to help you?" No. I have no needs. Anything I can do for you? I'm that guy. And it wasn't until recently that I really realized that in doing that, I was sinning against my wife. That I looked at my wife one day, and I said, "Honey, do you know that I need you?" She says, "I don't know. You seem to just take care of everything." I said, "No. I need you. And I need you in these ways as my wife. I am not able to pull myself together and I need your help here." But for me, it was the most vulnerable, humbling, painful place. I don't like to need anybody. I don't like to be taken care of. I don't like grace, and humility, and sacrifice coming to me. Peter wrestles with that also. Many of us do.

Jesus uses this as a teaching opportunity. In Verse 10, "Jesus answered, 'A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean." Jesus is using this opportunity as a metaphor for salvation, that we are dirty. We are filled with dirt and sin and stench, and the mud of our own lives. And that he will show us his total love, a little bit later in John's Gospel, where he dies for our sin, and then he resurrects from death to conquer enemies of sin and death, and he completely and totally cleanses us. And he says when you've been cleansed like that; you will still sin throughout your life. You'll get dirt on your hands. You'll get dirt on your face, so you need to wash up, just like you wash your hands and your face, you need to repent of your sin. Confess your sin to God. Tell God that you're sorry. Tell him that you have strayed, and then Christ will come in his humility and his kindness, and he will wash you up again. He says, "But, not everybody's clean." Judas is not clean.

And it's interesting for me, because in reading the story your first instinct is to pick on Peter. Peter is telling Jesus what – you know what I love about Peter though, at least Peter's honest. Peter thinks out loud. Peter is one of those guys with just no real barrier between what he is thinking and feeling, and what he articulates. He tells you where he's at. He tells you what he's thinking. He tells you what's going on. And then the thing I love about Peter though, is that when Jesus rebukes him, Peter repents and he changes his mind. Jesus says, "No. It's not gonna –" Peter's like, "Oh. Okay." So, he's teachable. He's honest and he's sort of brash, but he's teachable. Conversely, Judas is not. Judas maintains this pious, outward exterior. He never says anything. Through the Gospels, we don't have Judas saying anything. He doesn't cause any trouble. He doesn't pick any fights. Doesn't tell you how he's doing. Let's Jesus wash his feet; doesn't put up a fight. But, Judas has got this callous hard heart like pharaoh, and the more kindness that comes upon him, the harder he gets. It doesn't break him.

Jesus says, "Not everybody's clean." Judas, on the outward, looks clean, but in his heart, he is very far from God. Verse 12; "When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes on and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them." Jesus then says, "You call me 'Teacher', – I instruct you – "and 'Lord', – I rule over you with authority – "and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you," – what – "If you do them." And this is beautiful to me.

For many people, their Christianity is a philosophical speculation. Certainly, our faith give us plenty of room for philosophy and study and exploration and cognitive experiment, okay. But really, our faith is supposed to be intensely practical. How you treat people. How you spend money. How you spend time. That is predicated upon how you view God. And for some of us, we love to argue philosophical theological systems. We have a hard time just humbling ourselves in being inconvenienced and going out of our way to take care of someone else, especially our enemies. And Jesus says you will be blessed if you do these things, which means it is not enough to have a theology of Christ's humility; you need to have your own humility. It's not enough to have a theology of Christ's servanthood; you need to serve. I doesn't mean that you need to – it means more than just you have this great concept of grace, that you need to be gracious; that you'll be blessed if you do these things.

And I believe he is referring to both being like Peter, and permitting the Lord to cleanse us, and love us, and heal us, and renew us, and change us, and yielding ourselves to him, but I believe it also means being like Christ and serving others, and being the hands and the feet of Christ. Of having Christ live in us in such a way that he works through us, so that his love continues to be shown to its full extent. I love it in the Book of Acts, where the early church – the way that the early church grew is this very way. That they were just holy and just different, and as people saw that they would ask questions like, "Well, why do you feed that guy? He's crippled. He's not worth anything. Why do you love that woman? She's old. She's beyond childbearing years. She's beyond the beyond the ability to make any money. She's just a burden. Why do you take care of her? How come that guy is faithful to his wife, and how come that wife is respectful toward her husband? And how come those children honor their mother and father? And why is it, that even when trial and strife come, you people seem to have joy? What in the world is going on here?" And the answer, in the Book of Acts, is always Jesus – well, Jesus.

Jesus has died for our sins, so we're free from our sin, and now we can really live. And we can live in such a way that we have joy, even in the midst of adversity, and we can love even those who are our enemies and hate us, and seek our demise. It is a little foretaste of heaven and the Kingdom, and it is to be lived in a public way so that his people see that, they're curious about Jesus, and they want to know what he has done, and practically, how that changes things for us, his children. And so, Jesus says we'll be blessed if we do those things. And we live in an age when people will argue with lots of philosophical speculation and theory, but the one thing they can't argue with is a transformed life by God's grace. This person was mean and now they're sweet. They were hard and now they're soft. They were selfish and now they sacrifice for others. This person was abusive and now they're broken. This person was outcast and they've been loved; can't argue with that. And that's the function of the church, of the gathering of God's people, is to show Christ in such a way that we all are blessed, as Jesus promised that we would be.

And so the final place I want to take you, is I want to take you into Galatians, Chapter 6; the first five verses. The Apostle Paul talks about this in a very practical way. The reason I want to hit this with you is because I have seen two opposite extremes into which people fall, regarding this consideration of sacrifice and humility. Some people say, "Great. I finally got a church. I have people to take care of me. Wonderful. Now you guys just babysit me until Jesus comes back." Other people say; "Well, good. I need to be like Jesus, so now I need to take care of everybody," and they burn themselves out. And Paul addresses all of this in Galatians 6, and I think where he is going in part with this, is this issue of practical ministry. We have his very nonsensical idea in the church that ministry only happens by professionals, that it only happens at church, that it only happens when we have groups and clubs and meetings and committees. I tell you, if you want to do ministry, the last thing you do is put together a committee, okay. That's the last thing you want to do. Committees talk about ministry.

But we spend a lot of time talking about ministry, rather than just loving, and serving, and doing, and being. That's what Jesus is advocating for us. Practical, informal ministry is this. Formal ministry, somebody says, "Well, I need to be in ministry, so I need to go to Bible College. I need to go to Seminary. I need to get a degree. I need to become a pastor. I need to put together a team. I need to have charts and graphs." No, you don't. You are a priesthood of believers, according to Scripture. You're all in full-time ministry. You're all out there loving God in a public way, and even if people don't appreciate or they don't see it, you're doing it because you love God; and he knows. And so what that means, is that your informal ministry is really your ministry. As opportunities, sacred moments, provide themselves in your life, you take them. I'm gonna be humble here. I'm gonna serve here. I'm gonna help this person. I'm gonna love here. I'm gonna put grace in there, because these people need Christ, and Christ is in me and he's brought me to this place where I can just give myself to help them.

And Paul addresses that in Galatians 6, in the context of the church. He says, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin," – if somebody's got his feet all dirty – "you who are spiritual should restore him gently." Wash his feet and be careful. "But watch yourself, or you too may be tempted." You might want to run off and play in his mud. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." The word here for burdens is heavy load. Things that are difficult, and cumbersome, and weighty, we need to help each other, and we need to carry those things together. There is some things that you need Christ and you need Christ people to endure, because they are overwhelming and they are difficult, and so you need others. And then our pride will say, "No. No. No. I got it." And our humility will say, "No. That's true." "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else," the notion here is this; humility is not a competition.

If you look around and say, "Well, I guess I'm the most humble," you've missed it entirely, right. We don't hand out humility buttons or awards. We don't have a humility Olympics. That would just destroy the whole notion of humility. Humility does the right because it's the right thing because God gets glory, and we love him and it gives us joy. We don't do it for the praise. We don't do it to compare ourselves to others and really boast ourselves up with our pride. He tells us, in Verse 5, then, "For each one should carry his own load." And it seems like a contradiction, "Well, he's just said we should carry each other's loads, and here he says we should carry our own load." There is a differentiation in terminology here. The burdens that we're supposed to carry together, those are the big, heavy, weighty, difficult, cumbersome, burden things in life. The things that we're supposed to carry on our own, those are the things that are more light, more simple; things that we can take care of by ourselves. And it's this issue of discernment. I'll tell you how this works.

Some of you – you may not know if this is you or not. If you want to know, ask me and I'll let you know whether or not you're one of these people. You create drama. You may not have studied it in college, but you have earned an unofficial Master's Degree in drama. Everything is a catastrophe – big deal, "It's a crisis, call 911, call the Pope, call Jesus Christ, call the church, shut down the stock market; I can't find my remote control. It's – the end of the world is near." Some of you, everything is a heavy burden and you expect others to carry everything for you. "I can't pay the rent. Somebody else will pay it. Good. Okay. Good." You know, "I didn't get my homework done. Good. I'll just copy my roommates." Every little thing that you should do, someone else, you are anticipating they should do it for you. Paul's word to you is carry your own load. Carry it. Because what you are doing, you are taking energy, and time, and focus, and attention off of people that have really heavy burdens.

If every time something happens you get everyone's attention directed at you, then those who have real need are being neglected. Do you understand that? For the heavy things though, we need to help each other. We need to be like Christ and humble ourselves, especially when people are caught in a sin. We need to come down and help in their cleansing and their aide in their moment of need. And for some people, you need to know this; that if you have burdensome, heavy things, whereby you need God and his people and you don't give those things to God, and if you don't give those things to God's people, you are robbing us of an opportunity to be like Christ to you. It's a joy, because we would be blessed if we did it. But, if you don't let us know, we can't be blessed because we have no idea that there is a need for us.

And some of you are like that. Some of you know people like that. They don't tell you anything until months after it's too late to do anything. Your grandmother died! I had no idea. You and your wife are brawling and near a divorce? This has been going on for years. Why didn't you say

something? Financially – you got fired and you haven't been able to make ends meet and you're gonna lose your house? Why didn't you tell us? If you have some burdensome, cumbersome things that are legitimate, then we will be blessed if you participate in life with us, in such a way that you are humble enough to receive God's grace through us.

I'll break this down for you really simply. Usually, when it comes to John 13, what the pastor does is that he has a foot-washing service. I hate those things. I hate them because they miss the whole point of the passage. If we wash each other's feet, then you pair up with your best friend and you tickle their foot, and then we call it, you know, Christ like. No, it's not. Judas' feet, now that's a real hard task. In addition, if we do it here, it doesn't matter. What we've done is just created a big ministry called foot washing, where we can all get together and show everybody else in a public way how humble we are, which sort of ruins the whole point. It is about living your life and loving God and asking that God would show you those places where you could take opportunities, just like Christ took opportunity in that moment, to serve somebody. To humble yourself. To love them. To extend God's grace.

Very simply, what that means is this; if you're at work and your co-worker's car breaks down and they can't get back and forth to work, or they can't pick up their kids from daycare, you leave early, you get home late, and you pick them up. And don't oversell the thing. Don't put a worship CD in your deck. Don't put a Bible on your dash. Don't put a WWJD bracelet around your wrist. And for the love of God, don't put a fish on the back of your car, okay. And don't try to convert them all the way back and forth to work, because they're gonna jump out of your car and commit hara-kiri right on the highway. What you do is you love them, and you serve them, and you extend grace to them. And if they ask, "Why did you pick me up?" Just say, "This is not a sales pitch. I am a Christian. We have a God that loves people; takes care of them. We're supposed to love people and take care of them, and so I felt it would be a good idea if I picked you up." That's it. Love. Grace. Service. Humility. Kindness. Scripture says, in 1 Corinthians 13, that love is not rude. You should be nice about it.

What that simply means is – if you were a single guy, you've discovered the universal truth that single men do not wash dishes. Single men don't wash dishes, but they have created a theology that justifies the dirty dishes; they call it soaking. Single men call it soaking, which mean every dish in the whole house is dirty, and it's in the sink in water. Now, no one's ever going to wash them, but those are soaking – those are soaking. It's a special technique that single men master. And then single men argue about who's going to do the dishes, and you know what? No one is ever going to do the dishes. I'll just tell you the secret. As a former single man who went to paper plates for a very good reason – some men don't even go that far. Some men just buy things in cans because the can could also be used as a bowl or container to consume the food from. Which means, if I put the can on the stove, then the food gets warm and then I eat it with a spoon; I throw the can away, no more soaking. I've solved all my dilemmas. What that means, if you are one of those men in one of those living environments, do the dishes. And don't call a press conference. Don't call in the media. Don't have a national dishwashing ministry event day. Don't make a big deal out of it. Just do the dishes.

Some of you are single – most of you are single, when you get married, it is very simple. I'll give you a little tip. When you get married and your spouse has a really long, hard, difficult, complicated day, and they come home and they're frustrated, cook them dinner, give them a massage, make love to them, pray over them, and tuck them in bed. If you're single, you can't do that. It is taking the opportunities that are provided to you. At work, if someone is not getting something done, it is helping them finish their project. If it is a student or classmate that has been sick, it is taking notes, copying them, and giving the lecture notes to them so they can keep up. It is very simple, practical things. That is ministry. That is Christ likeness. It is not so that we can get glory. It is not even so that people will appreciate it. Jesus washed Judas' feet knowing full well, Judas was never going to say thank you, never going to be grateful, never going to appreciate it. He just did it because he loved the Father and it was the right thing to do, and he was blessed for doing it. And we should follow, as he instructed in his example, and love, serve with practical grace, help, mercy, and kindness, and know that we will be blessed if we do that, because Jesus has promised that we would.

For some of you this will be hard because you are very selfish. When you hear this, all you think is, "Yeah, that's right. Enough people don't serve me. People aren't being like Jesus to me. They're not doing enough stuff for me." You need to get your eyes off of your own feet and realize that other people have their own dirt, some of which is far more urgent to address. So for some of you, giving grace will be the hard part. For some of you like me, receiving grace will be the hard part. Recognizing that you need others to help you carry some burdens, that you need others to demonstrate Christ's humility, and service, and love, and kindness.

That's where we're – we always come to this point in our service as a place to respond. Like Jesus says, you can't just believe all these things in your head. Practically, you need to respond to them. So we worship, to thank God. We contemplate and pray. Part of that tonight, is if we have sin in our own life that we have never brought to Christ, or maybe we have never even come to Christ because we're too proud and we're trying to be good people and put our whole lives together and clean ourselves up so that God will love us. We just need to stop all that and be humble and learn Peter's lesson, and bring our sin to Christ tonight, and tell him that we need him to clean us up. Repent and apologize and ask him to forgive us, and he will.

We respond through taking of communion. For us, this is remembering Jesus' body and blood. That God humbled himself. It says in Scripture that it was humiliating for Jesus just to become a person. You can imagine God becoming a human, going through puberty, having siblings. Unbelievable that God would humble himself in that way, but God did. And so we remember Jesus' body and blood humbled, sacrificing and serving, particularly in his death. And he is also risen from death. He has conquered our enemies of sin and death. He now lives in his children, and he is working through them to show to the world the full extent of his love. And they're blessed by obeying what he instructs them to do. So, if you're a Christian we invite you to partake of communion. We also collect an offering. This is part of our worship. If you are not a Christian or you're a first time visitor, don't give. We're not wanting your money. In all sincerity, you are our guest. It is good to have you. Thank you for joining us.

And then lastly, you need to know that your worship tonight is not just what happens in this building. The preponderance of it will occur once you

depart, as you leave. Work. School. Home. Family. Friendships. Enemies. Loving. Serving. Being humbles. Being patient. Being kind. Being nice. Helping those in need. Telling those that are selfish to get their eyes on someone else's feet. Taking those that have real need and investing yourself in them to care for them, and love them, and serve them, and show them that God loves them and cares for them in practical and demonstrable ways.

And so God, we come to you tonight with heart of gratitude, scandalized by this portrait that our God would come down in human flesh. That the hours before his own death, he wouldn't even think about himself, but that instead he would think about his friends and their dirty feet. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that we are all like Judas and you have stooped down in humility and love and kindness to take care of us as you have him. Lord God, please deliver me and us from any foolish nonsense that would seek to convince us that we are any different than Judas. Lord God, you scandalize us with your love, and your grace, and your kindness, your faithfulness, your patience. You have melted – you have broken our hearts. You love us unconditionally and almost unexplainably.

Lord God, I confess that it is hard for our language to even begin to capture the humility of Christ, the scandal of grace. And so, God, we come tonight to respond. I pray that you would open all of our eyes as we're going about our life, showing us places, and times, and people, and circumstances where Christ's presence is desperately needed. That we could humbly, lovingly, patiently, selfishly just invest ourselves there. Just pour ourselves in, in a selfless way, so that others would see love, and grace, and mercy, and God. And Lord God, I pray that as a result of that, we would all be blessed, that we would have abounding joy, that we would be happy people even in the middle of trial, when our enemies hate us and refuse our love. Amen.